

No. 11.  
A

# LETTER

FROM

**RICHARD P. ROBINSON,**

AS CONNECTED WITH THE

**MURDER OF**

**ELLEN JEWETT,**

SENT IN A LETTER TO HIS FRIEND,

**THOMAS ARMSTRONG,**

WITH A

DEFENCE OF THE JURY.

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"Bad though he be, the Devil may be abused,  
Falsely charged and causelessly accused."

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New-York.

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SOLD WHOLESALE AT 29 ANN-STREET.

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1837.



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RHODE-ISLAND, April, 1837.

In laying this confidential Letter from my school-fellow, the unfortunate and persecuted Richard P. Robinson before the public, I may be by the prejudiced part of community, censured as a busy meddling person, who dare assert the prerogative of an American citizen to think and act as his judgment suggests in defiance of the body of Editors, who like a pack of bloodhounds have united to hunt a lad of nineteen years of age even unto the death, merely because the keeper of a brothel charged him with the perpetration of a crime they could not substantiate, and of which the judgment of twelve respectable citizens had pronounced him *innocent*. How these gentlemen have been stigmatized since for not robbing an honorable family of a member is well known; but let the *Sun* beware, a rod is suspended that may fall and cause an eclipse ere long. I say *nothing* at present; the inventor of the moon story is capable of any other tale or deception to serve his interest. I have no other object in view in publishing this Letter from my youthful friend, who shared my sports in boyhoods happy days, than to dispose the charitable to think of him with Christian charity, and the liberal minded to judge for themselves of his faults. May my humble efforts prove successful, and time bring truth to light, is the sincere prayer of the

Public's Humble Servant,

THOMAS ARMSTRONG.

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DEAR TOM—

That you among the many do not deem me guilty is amidst all my suffering an alleviation of which you can form no idea; and by stating all my crimes, as I now do to you, I trust I shall confirm you in your confidence of my innocence of the heinous crime of which I am accused. Bad I have been; but thank God my hand is clear of blood, and my conscience of seduction! Emma T. was the seducer, not the seduced: but she is married, sacred be her fame: her name shall never pass my lips nor be marked by my pen. But I will now proceed to give you a clear, unvarnished account of my every crime during my career in New York, that has terminated so fatally. I have now found a secure retreat, far from the persecution of the corps editorial who assailed me; and here I will remain till circumstances bring the perpetrators of Ellen's death to light.

Your sincere friend,

RICHARD P. ROBINSON.



## LETTER, & c.

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“Teach me to feel another’s woe,  
To hide the faults I see ;  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me.”

It has ever been the custom from the earliest ages of civilization, where moral laws are known and practiced, that when an accused being, no matter what his crime, had passed the fiery ordeal of the laws and been by them pronounced guiltless, that their punishment in this life should cease—such is the tenor of our glorious constitution and a fair trial by jury, man’s greatest privilege, which ought, like a halo, to shield him after he had stood the test of a public investigation, and no proof appeared strong enough to convict him of the crime which chance, envy, contumely or necessity had brought against his life or reputation. Such has been the custom in all nations, till the present year, when my unfortunate case occurred. That I could easily have accounted for where I had passed the fatal Saturday night the unfortunate Ellen was sacrificed to the vile and envenomed passion of jealousy, is a simple fact. But conscious of my own innocence in the base transaction, and half petrified with horror at the sight of a beautiful girl, whom I had loved with a wild boyish passion, lying a mangled corpse before me, sent unprepared to meet her Creator, without perhaps time to ask forgiveness, shocked at the sight and irritated at the unfounded charge brought against me, my spirit recoiled from the accusation and spurned the vile calumny from me, treating it and its inventors with the contempt they both merited. Indeed the only rational answer I condescended to give was to that vile devil incarnate Mrs. Gallagher, when I asked her in answer to her hypocritical sympathy for my dear, my beloved mother, what inducement I could possibly have to mar all my brilliant prospects by such an action, as would render all my family wretched for life. This rather seemed to stagger Mrs. Townsend, and for a time she was silent, and I said no more to them, and rested my hope on the equitable laws of my country and the sound judgment of my fellow-citizens, who would constitute the jury. This silence offended the mass of the people; but to my friends I gave a clear and distinct history of how and where I had passed the fatal evening till eleven o’clock, when by appointment Ellen admitted me when she let out her first visitor, who Mrs. Townsend swore was me. That I was in the house when the champagne was brought up was true—but I had not been there at that time fifteen minutes. Ellen informed me by a note that she expected a rich and new admirer that evening, who was to take my fictitious name. That he would not stay late, and I could make my entrance as he made his exit; for this purpose she opened the front door for him herself and admitted me unseen,



as she passed by any of the family. My intention was to break off my connection with Ellen and the rest of the vile sisterhood, as a holy, sincere love for an amiable girl had produced a total change in my feelings, and I looked back with horror on the paths of vice, infamy and degradation I had led from the time I came to New York. To account for the depravity of my early life, may in some measure atone for the injuries I have done my family and gratify the curiosity of the people, who so ardently thirsted for my life.

I was at that period of my life when the passions begin to assert their prerogative over the nature of every member of the human family; let any person then judge of the temptation that assailed me, scarcely more than fifteen years of age, ardent, tender, and rather handsome—well dressed—with money at my command—I soon became an object of attraction to the young females who patrol the streets of New York, seeking for admiration and fancying that every one looking at them is smitten with their charms, and ready to kneel and worship them.

Thus attracted by the beauty of Emma T.—, a girl, poor, vain and selfish, who fancied me a gentleman's son of high expectation, and thought to entangle me in a secret marriage. Our acquaintance commenced in the street at night, but I had often met her in various places in daylight, whether by accident or design I know not, smiles of recognition had been exchanged between us, and I spoke to her, and she answered as familiarly as an old acquaintance would have done, accompanied me to a confectioner's shop where I spent my money liberally, well paid for it in the pleasure that it gave my fair companion.

From that time we met every evening. I escorted her to all the public gardens, lavished presents of clothing, trinkets and money on her. By her direction I attended a dancing school, in which she at my expense had become a scholar; here in the gay whirl of a ball room, I saw her the admiration of all the ladies who frequented it, and observed her flirting, gay and coquettish manner to all. I soon discovered that the pretty toy was as devoid of gratitude as she was of either feeling or prudence.

Time as it ripens the gay and smiling blossom into fruit, matured my mind, and I became conscious that my pretty Emma was angling for a husband, and would in despite of her obligations to me, (and they were numerous,) marry the first man that would have her. This conduct on her part accelerated her ruin—for her I had committed depredations on my employer to no small amount. One crime is the parent of another, for her I had become a thief, and that made me her seducer—if seduction it can be called, when she was as willing as myself.

The effect of our intercourse in time became visible, and she took boarding in the house with Ellen Jewett. This was in a private boarding-house where only young ladies who had good friends to support them were received; here I paid ten dollars a week for her board, exclusive of her other expenses which were extravagant. Oh! how I have shrunk from her and trembled, when she has commanded me to get her the most expensive clothing, rich trinkets, diamonds, pearls, and jewellery of every kind. Nor dare I ever refuse to obey her commands, for she threatened to betray me to my employers and instigate her family to prosecute me for her seduction. Let any one read the tragedy of George Barn-



well, and they will see me personified. And never was the character of Millwood more fully verified than by this young virago before she was sixteen years of age. For a long time I used to steel up to her chamber and await her coming; but she soon grew tired of solitude and began to frequent the theatre, to which I was obliged to accompany her.

Our first visits were to the second tier of boxes, but she disliked the decorum requisite in decent society, and one evening when I was not with her made her debut with Ellen in the third tier. Here she was taken ill and conveyed home in a hack, and for some weeks her life was despaired of. During her illness the ill-fated Ellen, watched her with all the tenderness of a kind hearted sister; soothed my apprehensions for her life by holding out hope of her recovery: the child I was told was dead born, but this I believe was not true, nor do I know what became of it. During Emma's sickness I had become well acquainted with the frail sisterhood, and I was very liberal of my presents to them. Silks, velvets, clothes, were liberally distributed among them, and I was in high favor with the whole family; many a night have I passed with the *cher amies* of some of our grave citizens—men of families, fortune, and business, whose ladies visited them at their offices, stores and boarding-houses. Men who would pass judgment on vice as though a very saint was supporting the cause of chastity and virtue; both of which they violated daily.

Could the secret transactions of the city of New-York be exposed; what a scene of depravity would be exhibited! Sodom and Gomorrah could be no worse! The servants are but the imitators of their employers, whose vices they copy, and laugh in their sleeve at morality, sobriety, honesty and industry; the property holder oppresses the tenant to support his extravagance, and that of his family; and servants in return retaliate on him when opportunity offers. Thus I was conscious of being no more guilty than others. Look at the case of young Onderdonk, a clergyman's son, living under the protection and surveillance of his father, whilst I was an unprotected boy, without female friends to introduce me to respectable society, sent into a boarding-house, where I could enter at what hour I pleased—subservient to no control after the business of the day was over. Mr. Hoxie never inquired how my nights were passed. It was enough for him that I did my duty at the store—sure as he thought of my fidelity there, he cared not what my misconduct was in other hours or places. Oh! may my melancholy fate be an example to parents in the country how they send their sons into the vortex of vice and dissipation, without one friend to advise them, or a prudent master to control them—enquire their habits—ascertain the hours they keep and inspect their accounts. Truly were merchant's apprentices taken into their master's houses, or placed under the authority of the mistress or master of the house they board in, such numbers of them would not fall from their high and honorable stations in society, nor become the inmates of a prison. But when a youth accustomed to the domestic comforts of his father's house in the country, with all the family endearments of home, and scarcely allowed the command of a dollar unless on the condition of not spending it, finds himself transported as if by magic, from the bosom of his family and the attentions of an



affectionate mother to the gay emporium of folly, fun and fashion, and the cold comforts of a New York boarding-house, where he is not expected to spend more time in the dining-room than is requisite to eat his meals—and with plenty of loose cash at his command, a very low salary, scarcely adequate to pay his board and washing, what can be expected but that he will add to his income, if he can do it without detection. This was particularly my situation when I became acquainted with Ellen Jewett. Her manner was devoid of that pert flippancy so peculiar to the demi-reps of New York: nor did she either drink ardent spirits or use coarse vulgar language. Brought up in a genteel family in her native state, (Maine,) and associating as the New England girls do, with their master's daughters, her mind had been highly informed—her taste refined, she could really play the lady when she chose:—nor was she ever gross, though something of the kitchen virago would appear when she was very angry and off her guard. Ellen was also a neat needle-woman, very handy and industrious, kind-hearted, humane and feeling; these virtues combined with her taste for literature and the fine arts, gave Ellen so decided a superiority over her companions, that none but a brute and a villain ever offered an insult, and none but a damned spirit took her life.

It was during Emma's illness that my intimacy with Ellen commenced, when not an idea of any other intercourse entered either of our minds. She was to me a ministering angel of comfort, and when Emma recovered, Ellen took her to the country, where she personated her sister, and left her at board in a respectable private family. Emma's sickness, her extravagance, and more than all, her ignorance, had alienated all my affection for her; and others throwing out lures for me, I sunk deep into the sty of profligacy: it was first one girl and then another, till like the Grand Turk I had a harem, and only threw the handkerchief to the one I chose. From this state of debauchery I was aroused to a sense of my danger by the return of Ellen, who soon learned my career, and pointed out the physical injury my constitution would sustain, and the danger I ran of detection, by being so lavish of my rich presents to those who would not hesitate to betray me to my employers if I offended them; this alarmed me, checked my mad career of passion, and awoke me to a sense of prudence hereafter in distributing the rich goods I purloined, among the girls of the house.

From this period I attached myself wholly to Ellen, who, though she was five years older than myself, I really loved as much as a youth such as I was, could love one of her class. Ellen made herself acquainted with all my private affairs, my family, and the expectations I had from my father; she was not a mean mercenary, nor a dishonest girl for one of her cast; but wealthy visitors lavished on her money in plenty, and this she used with prudence, and had saved as she frequently observed, a small fortune; of which I have not a doubt, as she speculated deeply in counterfeit money, and generally won largely at cards. As I was her favorite love gallant, I knew all her private transactions, and have seen her with large sums of money which she told me she put out at interest, through the agency of a broker in the city of New York. But what became of Emma? Ah! thereby hangs a tale which I cannot relate,



lest I injure the peace of a family. Ellen used all her powers of mind and person to keep us apart, and succeeded; whether she ever had an idea I would marry her or not, I do not know, but she certainly used every art she was mistress of, to gain a hold on my affections; but there she did not succeed, as I was too conscious of the respect I owed my family to entangle myself further than I could shake off at pleasure; for her favors I ever paid her. But my connection with Emma had steeled my heart against all Ellen's allurements; that I was in her power, I was conscious, for she had initiated me into a species of defrauding by which I gained money largely and Mr. Hoxie lost nothing; thus far I knew she had the power to blast my reputation, and I feared to offend her seriously. I knew she had a powerful mind, but a noble generous spirit. She detested the mode of life into which she had been seduced, by a villain who is now a married man and has a family; towards him she cherished a decided hatred, and her soul thirsted for revenge. She frequently wrote to him threatening letters, vowing vengeance against him and his family—nor should I be surprised if time and circumstances should prove him the author of her death. Money and jealousy are powerful impulses to crime among the girls. Ellen and myself frequently quarreled, and then we wrote to each other; she often endeavored to intimidate me to submission by threatening to expose me to the world. This mode at first succeeded, but as I became better acquainted with her disposition, I acquired courage to brave her anger and set her at defiance; thus passed over two years of crime, infamy and misery.

My connection with Gray, grew out of my pecuniary transactions with Ellen. He became an agent for me, and to carry on our business we occupied a room which we rented. Oh! what dark deeds are done when single gentlemen hire private rooms, and particularly when they follow no apparent business. At length my guardian angel seemed as if he had not entirely forsaken his charge. Love, a pure and holy love filled my heart; a feeling so sacred, so holy, warmed my bosom for a young lady, my equal in all respects as far as family and fortune, but oh! how much my superior in virtue; yet to this lovely girl I looked up with hope, as the being who would guide my footsteps to the paths of peace and calm domestic happiness. I was still young in years, scarcely past the days of boyhood, but how old in vice! yet I had perhaps a long life before me, but to make atonement too short. How far my first employer had suspected me I knew not, but Mr. Hoxie I was confident was unconscious of any loss he had sustained by me.

My first step in reformation was to break off my intercourse with Gray. This I easily effected, his marriage being a sufficient reason for cutting him, as the phrase goes. This action alarmed Ellen, and she became suspicious of my dereliction from her supremacy. I pleaded suspicion that my visits to her house were suspected at the store; she changed her residence to Mrs. Townsend's. I objected to the house as too public; she accused me of desertion. I did not deny the charge, and demanded my miniature which had been painted for Emma. How Ellen got it I know not, nor how long she had had it; she refused it, and several letters passed between us—she threatened me, I retaliated, and



in return I threatened her as party concerned, avowing my independence, and the war ended. We generally met at the theatre, there I informed her of my affection for the gentle Sophia, and my determination to quit all my nefarious practices, to marry when I was able; aye, and become a good citizen. What Frank said she, good like the rest of mankind! No Ellen I have played the hypocrite too long, I will drop the hateful mask and be what I appear. Will you, said she, shedding tears, I will not drag you down to hell; if I am bad myself, Frank, I respect godness in others; for instance your Emma, she now appears a highly respectable young woman, and may continue so; would that some friendly hand had been held out to me, ere I had plunged so deeply in sin and infamy, but now it is too late; nothing remains but to live on, get rich, and endow a convent with my money; then I may stand a chance of being canonized as a saint. But do Frank, look at that ugly old gray bearded fool, staring at us. He is like Othello dying with jealousy, Who is he? replied I. Ah! said she, my friend at present; Mrs. Townsend introduced him, he is a rich merchant from New Orleans. I intend to fleece him well—if old rats will have dainties they must pay well for them. I put her into a coach and promised to call on her; this was two weeks before her death.

From this night letters passed between us as various in their style as her temper was capricious, veered from one extreme of passion to another; disappointed in her expectations of having me in her chains, she maddened with jealousy; she then threatened me with a woman's vengeance; to these I returned answers in her own style of defiance. These letters were carefully preserved by my enemies to answer their own purposes. At length the storm of passion subsided, we met by her own invitation and exchanged forgiveness. Ellen wept long and tenderly on my bosom. Oh Frank! said she, sobbing, how salubrious are tears; they are the preservers of woman's life and reason; but for them my heart would break and I should wander forth a raving maniac, but that solace has cooled the fever of my brain and relieved my heart. Yes, Frank! step back before you are hurled down the whirlpool of destruction. Lost to your family and society, or worse, a curse to the first and a depradator on the last. Passion has been the rock on which you sunk into vice, may it now exalt you to the path of virtue and moral rectitude; but do not Frank, forsake the unfortunate girl that loves you tenderly, but visit me sometimes and tell me of your Sophia. I shall not live long Frank! I feel a presentiment that my life will be short. Eliza S. hates me with a deadly hatred, and like the snake when charming the bird, smiles on me and openly professes the warmest friendship for me; the others envy and dislike me, but her hatred is deadly. Why Ellen, said I, do you not take a cheap house to yourself, and seek in solitude that reflection that may awake repentance. Alas! I reflect every hour; but what am I? an outcast—a common prostitute! What but a brothel will any house be that I inhabit? and I dread solitude. Reflection is hell to me, and worse than all, I cannot petrify my feelings by intoxication, and thus I go on from day to day—

“Repenting still and still offending,

Abuser of the gifts of nature,

A wretched self-condemning creature.”



I shall die Frank in youth, and leave all my soul-condemning gains to those who will treat my name with contempt:—she then mentioned the person who managed her money for her, told me how much she had saved, and where placed. But Frank, this is all dross to me. Why Ellen, replied I, do you not purchase a farm, far from New York, where the duties of your situation would keep you busy? Yes, and be murdered by my servants;—no, no, Frank, the cities are my only places of safety, where I am known and would be missed. No! they dare not kill me; you Frank would revenge my death, and Bill Easy too, and so would Frank Rivers the second. This conversation took place on the Monday before her death. I promised to call and pass Wednesday evening with her. And Frank, said she bring me small hatchet, so that I can break my wood small with it, to make my fire burn quick; if I send a servant to buy one the rest will borrow it and I shall be plagued to keep it; but if you bring it, they will not know I have one. Accordingly on Wednesday evening, I took the store hatchet up with me, as I had forgot to buy one for her. My face and figure was disguised, but I heard E. S. exclaim, that is Frank Rivers, I know his air and step! Ellen met me at the door, and conducted me to her apartment; this was the second time I had ever been in that den of iniquity. Ellen and me passed a pleasant evening; several visitors called on her, but she was engaged. To her I opened my whole heart, and she confirmed me in my resolution of changing all my habits. But do this gradually Frank, said she, or it may excite suspicion on the past; keep all your papers yourself secure in your bureau. Call to see me sometimes as you would a male acquaintance, and on Saturday night I will give you all your letters and the miniature;—at eleven o'clock we parted to meet on Saturday night—fatal night, what have you not lost me? Life alone is of no importance when reputation is lost; my aged father's fortune injured, his feelings tortured to agony—my affectionate mother's life endangered; sisters, uncles, every relative drenched with the obloquy attached to the name of R. P. Robinson; would to God I had died in my infancy!

But let me proceed methodically. On the fatal Saturday evening I had agreed to visit Ellen, to receive from her my picture and letters, burn hers and end all personal intercourse between us: this was my first step in reformation, and my heart beat freely in my bosom with renovated hope, that I might regain the path of moral rectitude, from which I had estrayed; and that by fulfilling my duties in nature life to God and man, I might obtain pardon from my Creator for the sins of my youth, and yet know peace and happiness. Thus flattering myself with the hope of an emancipation from the slavery in which Ellen had held me for two long years, I exultingly took tea, and formed an engagement to ride out the ensuing morning with some of the other boarders. After tea I equipped myself for my visit in the cloth cloak that I kept for masquerading, and would have proceeded to Ellen's in the early part of the evening, but did not wish my visit to continue long, and left my companion, (as he stated on the trial,) took the way towards Clinton Hall; but instead of going where I might be recognized in my ill-acquired finery, I went into an Oyster Cellar near the Park; here I whiled away the time, looking at the engagements of the various parties, "alike un-



knowing and unknown," till the clock struck nine. I then bent my steps towards Thomas-street, and saw a man closely muffled knocking at the door. I stopped to take an observation, heard the name of Frank Rivers called—the stranger entered—the door closed—I heard no more. Ellen I now knew would be invisible for some time, so I turned to the business part of the city and carelessly entered Mr. — store, where I beguiled the lagging hours with social chat; now talked of this and then of that, till the clock struck ten, and they began to talk of closing for the night. I took leave of them and again set out for Thomas-street.

By passing through the hall of a house in Chapel-street, occupied by decent colored people, I could see the light in Ellen's chamber window, and discern the shadows on the wall through the curtains: there were two persons apparently moving about; Ellen was one, the other her visitor going away. I tripped lightly out and gained Mrs. Townsend's porch just as the door opened. Ellen's figure concealed me from observation, and I glided behind her and lightly passed in unseen by all but one of the fiends. On her entrance Ellen laughed at my Harlequin-like agility, saying, Frank you would do to steal an heiress. We then spoke of the cause of my visit; she gave me the picture but refused the letters, saying that I must come for them again. Her face was clouded when I objected to this. I tried to soothe her and to prevent high words; I requested her to get a bottle of champaign, took up a book that lay on the toilet table, and to conceal my face lay down on the bed with my back to the door.

Ellen returned without the wine, which Mrs. Townsend brought up, impelled by curiosity to see who Ellen had there; but she took the wine from her, ere she entered, and abruptly shut the door; therefore, Mrs. Townsend could only have caught a glimpse of the back part of my head, and swore to my person by report.

Ellen and I drank a glass of wine between us, then sat down by the fire, which was nearly out, and I wrapped my cloak around her. We sat conversing in whispers till after 12 o'clock, when Ellen lighted a candle, and I took the lamp to light me down stairs. At Mrs. Townsend's door I knocked, and received a refusal, when I demanded my liberty. I then set down the lamp in the hall, slipped into the yard, climbed over three fences, and finding a door open, passed through a hall into Chapel-street, from thence home: the Hall clock struck one, just as I entered my boarding house.

Cheerfully I entered my bed-chamber, put the miniature into my bureau, and calmly consigning my cares to oblivion, sunk into a sound sleep, from which my bed-fellow awoke me, to enquire when I came to bed; half asleep I answered him, and sunk again into the happy state of unconsciousness, from which I was aroused by the harpies of the law.

When Mr. Brink awoke me, the first idea that occurred to my mind, was, that my peculations had been discovered by Mr. Hoxie; and that Ellen had betrayed me to the punishment of the civil law. Thus terrified by actual guilt, I became passive, and obeyed all orders silently, till I heard the cruel charge brought against me; then the calm pride of innocence soothed all fears from my kind employer, and gave me a hope for the future.



This is all I have to confess of my past life. A youth in years, experience had matured me in wisdom: henceforth and forever, the crooked ways of the world shall have no power over my mind. Nor shall the wiles or blandishments of a wanton woman, betray me to her dwelling. Had I not gone to Ellen's that fatal night, another object must have been selected, on whom to lay the crime. Whose voice denounced me as a murderer, I have never understood—the blame was general when Mr. Brink came; at least so the watchmen testify. Mrs. Townsend's words were, "they have killed the girl, and set fire to the house!"

Who are *THEY*? That is in the *plural*—*I* was only a *singular*—till some of Mrs. Townsend's wise counsellors, changed the plural to the personal Frank Rivers. My cloak which was wrapped around Ellen, when I left the house, was rendered one of the presumptive proofs against me; and it was asserted I had brought the hatchet with me, tied to my cloak; when the porter proved that the hatchet had been lost on the Wednesday before. Thus I must have planned the murder four days previous to its execution. Yet it was proved that I had passed the Wednesday night with Ellen, the time I gave her the fatal hatchet.

Had I been disposed to injure Ellen, what had I to do, but to indict the house, and place its inmates in Bellevue? Had I been the hardened and cold-blooded murderer, the press has denounced me, would I have left my cloak and hatchet behind me, to betray me to the world? No! no! And had I set fire to the house when I left it, would I have awakened Mrs. Townsend, to require her to open the door for me, as the draft would have fanned the flame to a blaze? Or, would a fire-light, between twelve and one o'clock, have lain smothering till past three, at least two hours? And when discovered, why was not their first efforts made, to alarm the sleeping girl? But no. Ellen was left dying amidst the flames, till the watchmen came and discovered her situation: then the crime must be laid on one individual, or the whole inmates are liable to suspicion and arrest.

I was young, and known to be poor—fancied friendless; the game was a deep one, but all was thrown on the hazzard of chance. So that they escaped they cared not who fell. Their purpose was answered—they escaped while I was made the scape-goat. Thank my Creator, and the jury, who possessed sense and discernment sufficient to penetrate through the horrid plot; my life is spared. But how spared? To be pursued by the execrations of my fellow-citizens, for a crime, of which I call God to judge, I am not guilty of, and of which, none accused me, but one of the most base and degraded of her sex. Her and her satellites, were the accusers and witnesses.

The press has generally censured Mr. Phoenix, for not bringing the men forward, that were in the house; there was, also, two women, inmates of the house, why were they not called? The fact was, the State's Attorney knew, that no person, in a large house like that, could know what was passing in another apartment, where doors are locked; and that their testimony could be of no use, only to prolong the trial. Mr. Phoenix, like the jury, was conscious of my innocence; and that the testimony, unless positive, was of no use. And the watchmen all opposed her assertion of my guilt, which, thank Heaven, I am clear of.



To time and circumstances, I leave my reputation; and shall wander far, far from the temptations of refined society, where woman smiles but to betray. From henceforth, the world will hear no more of Richard P. Robinson.

I cannot, like Ephraim K. Avery, brave the scorn and contempt of those who fancy me the guilty being, a brothel-keeper attempted to make me; nor can I see my father's home sold to pay my lawyer's fees. To those gentlemen my gratitude will ever be due; but for Mr. Hoxie, that kind, good man—may health, peace and happiness be ever his—the mild forbearance, he evinced, when my frauds on him were detected, prove him the true Christian—bless him Heaven!—forever bless him.

To the young men who peruse this, I can only say,—

Be warn'd, ye youth, who see my sad despair,  
Avoid loose women, false as they are fair;  
By my example learn to shun my fate,  
How wretched is the man that's wise too late.  
Ere innocence and fame, and life be lost,  
Here purchase wisdom, cheaply, at my cost.

To my unrelenting persecutors, who would have taken my life, I only hope that they may have no more unrepented crimes on their consciences than I have. As for the foolish letters published in the papers, found in Gray's pocket, they are base calumnies; and were never written by me. I well knew, that if my life was saved, the tide of popular prejudice was too strong for me to remain in New York; nor could my father have permitted it. Mr. Hoxie of course could not retain me in his employ: and where could I find an asylum, but with my parents, whose grey hairs I have bowed to the earth; but they forgive me—they who I have injured; and will not society at large, who I never offended, withhold their persecution from a being scarcely worth the trouble the petty editors have been at, to drive to madness or worse depredation on the public.

But, thanks to the liberality of a mind too powerful to be biassed by the yelping of the pack of curs, that pursued me with their malice, I have found a safe harbor, where industry and integrity, may at a future period of my life, enable me to prove to the world at large, I am not that hardened, cold-blooded villain, which I have been represented by those who persecute me in their papers, merely because they had no other subject on which to expend the malignancy of their own hearts, or fill the columns of their papers.

Resting on this hope, and confiding implicitly in the protection of that great Omnipotent Power, who rules the fates of all his creatures; and who brings light out of darkness—that the black transaction which has banished me from friends, home and country, will yet be brought to light; and my innocence of Ellen's death be clearly proved.

I have ventured to write to you—and for your satisfaction only, have I undertaken a task I shrunk from to gratify my enemies. But, knowing from experience, that with you—

"Friendship is not a name,  
A charm that lulls to sleep;  
A shade that follows wealth and fame,  
But leaves the wretch to weep."



This knowledge it was, that after such a lapse of time, induced me to commit these events to paper; and declare my innocence of the crime for which I am by the public voice, condemned—although cleared by the laws of my country.

This, dear Tom, is the last you may ever hear of your ill-fated, but  
Sincere friend,

RICHARD P. ROBINSON.

*To Thomas Armstrong, Esq.*

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## DEFENCE OF THE JURY.

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### MR. ARMSTRONG, TO THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL.

After a careful perusal of Mr. Robinson's statement of the foregoing facts, I wrote to New York, for a printed copy of the trial, to read and judge for myself—the reason on which the public prints based their outcry against so young a man as Richard is; and also, why they blame both Jury and State's Attorney, and all the numerous hosts of witnesses that appeared in his favor.

I read and marked every event there sworn to, by all parties; and do now solemnly declare, that there does not appear to my judgment, one point on which to hang a charge. The only thing Mrs. Townsend's testimony proves, was that he, or some one like him, was in Ellen's room reading at half past ten o'clock at night, and that between two and three o'clock, the lamp belonging to that room, was found extinguished in the hall, and Ellen's bed clothes on fire. That instead of awaking the sleeping girl, she called for the city watch to extinguish the flames and save her property. This is the sum and substance of the principal witnesses testimony.

The first watchman that entered the abode of infamy, swears that he met one man and two women at the door of Ellen's room, who were permitted to escape unsearched, nay almost unnoticed. That on his discovering Ellen with a wound in her head, lying dead amidst the flames, Mrs. Townsend began to cry out, "Oh! they have murdered the girl, and set fire to the house!" Who were the **THEY**, Mrs. Townsend meant? Was it the man and the women that escaped in the general confusion? He also swears, that one of the girls exclaimed, "she knew who the murderer was, and would tell at the proper time and place!" But she was said to be dead, when called for at the trial; and one man poisoned himself soon after Ellen's death, that was proved to have been in the house that night. But before his death, he, it was rumoured, had made a trip to Boston first. In short, all combining circumstances tend to criminate somebody, but **WHO?** Not Richard P. Robinson! The jury could not, if they abided by their oath, convict him; for they were sworn to judge by the testimony set before them: and there was not one single act that tended to his conviction; or even justly to an accusation.



Mrs. Townsend's house was large, and occupied by the most depraved members society can boast of; and who will not suppose that the property Ellen Jewett had in her chamber, was of sufficient value to tempt any one of the fiendish inmates or visitors, to perpetrate the nefarious deed, where suspicion has never yet fallen.

One of the witnesses on the trial, stated to the Court, that Ellen Jewett was one of the richest dressed women that frequented the third tier of boxes in the Park Theatre. Report says that she had a gold watch, with a variety of trinkets attached to it; as also a rich cameo buckle for her waist, with diamonds, rings and other trinkets.

Here, then, was booty sufficient to tempt an inhabitant or frequenter of a brothel, to perpetrate such a crime, and to save themselves, attempt to fix a stigma of the crime, on any member of the respectable part of the community; towards whom the notorious community harbor a decided hatred. And, it is well known, that they spare no pains, first to vitiate the morals of those they can attract to their dens of infamy, and then betray them; thus gratifying their malignancy, and adding a new member to the FREE CLOTH, as they call themselves.

Now how many of these motives may have influenced the accusation of Richard, I am not prepared to say, or if any. Plunder alone, or jealousy, may have been the actuating spirit of the murderer; and self-defence the cause, or perhaps suspicion; for it is not probable Mrs. Townsend would deprive her house of so attractive an inmate, by whose residence, she was sure of filling her coffers.

But where was Ellen's valuables? her watch, trinkets, clothes, and money? Were they found, or accounted for? If she had no relations, the state or city became her heir; and they ought to be satisfactorily accounted for to the public.

A loud clamor, or rather hue and cry, has been raised against Mr. Phoenix, for not bringing all the inmates of the house into Court; but where was he to find them. They fled ere morning dawned; and had they been called on, how would their testimony have affected the trial; for who can know in so large a house, what is transpiring in the adjoining room. The blow was silently given, and no doubt proved instantly fatal; perhaps not even a groan escaped the lips of the dying girl—then how would the visitors' testimony have availed, or been of any importance.

Besides, Mr. Furlough's evidence proved Richard was not in the house at the hour Mrs. Townsend swore to; and it is a juryman's duty to attend to the testimony of the respectable part of the community first. And who will dare to assert or what reasonable man believe, that so respectable a citizen as Mr. Furlough, would perjure himself for a strange lad—a mere visitant in his store; or that such honorable men as Mr. Hoxie, or Richard's council would tempt a man to such an action. Mr. Furlough is wealthy; so that money could not be a temptation to him. Or how could either Mr. Hoxie, or the lawyers know, that Richard had been at his store? Or with what plea could one man ask another to take a false oath? The idea is as base as the whole of the proceedings, which has apparently ruined the character of a young man, just entering life, and destroyed the peace and comfort of his parents. That he is far removed from his persecutors is all we know; and probably, if not driven to



desperation by the persecution of the press, may regain the esteem of the community, in which he has fixed his residence.

That such may be the result of the prosecution of a lad, all good persons, particularly parents, and the jury that saved his life, will unite with me in praying for; and with this hope, I subscribe myself,

The Public's very humble Servant,

**Thomas Armstrong.**

N. B. If Jurymen are not permitted to abide by their oath's, for fear of the anathemas of the press, I fear trial by Jury must cease; curts of judicature be abolished, and the *Penny editors* become the arbitrators of our lives, liberty, character, and property--as no conscientious citizen will condemn himself to perdition to please them.